



The City of Coral Gables

Historical Resources Department

CORAL GABLES MERRICK HOUSE GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2014, 8:30 a.m.
Coral Gables Merrick House
907 Coral Way, Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Table with columns for MEMBERS, days of the month (J, F, M, M*, A, M, J, J, A, S, O, N, D), and APPOINTED BY. Rows list members like Amy Kutell, Daisy Baez, Marlin Ebbert, etc., and their attendance status for each day.

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Dona M. Spain, Kara Kautz, Emily Ahouse. Legend: A = Absent, P = Present, - = No Meeting, + = Resigned Member, E = Excused, * = Special Meeting, ^ = New Member

GUEST: Karelia Martinez Carbonell and Jane Maranos, Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables.

MEETING RECORD / MINUTES PREPARATION: Nancy C. Morgan, Coral Gables Services, Inc.

Ms. Yusko called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and stated attendance for the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 10, 2014:

A motion was made by Ms. Ebbert, seconded by Ms. Lam and unanimously passed, to approve the November 10, 2014 minutes as written.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION OF CORAL GABLES (HPACG):

Ms. Martinez Carbonell, HPACG President, and Board Member Ms. Maranos proposed a special tour of Merrick House for approximately 50 people on March 26, 2015 as part of other Coral Gables destination tours...

Discussion comments:

- For 50 people, three tours would be necessary, each tour consuming one hour of time;
Docents would be necessary;
The \$10 tour fee per person paid by the Encore Group will be donated to HPACG;
A self-guided tour was suggested since docents may not be available on a Thursday;
Ms. Kautz reported that Encore Group contacted staff and also made arrangements to hire Docent Juan Riera to conduct tours on March 26th.

Under the circumstances, Ms. Martinez Carbonell said they would limit arrangements for the group to a Biltmore Hotel tour.

EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Althea's Garden Party, November 23, 2014: Ms. Rodriguez, Chair

Group observations:

- Overall the event was deemed a success.
- Income: \$123 in donations; \$1,195 in auction sales; \$54 in food sales; \$275 in vendor fees. Total income: \$1,647.
- A few expected vendors didn't participate; a mix-up in dates caused only one Boy Scout to participate; however, Twenty Little Working Girls helped out.
- Attendance was less than anticipated; however, the Miami International Book Fair occurred the same weekend.
- Visitors were disappointed about the lack of House tours, with only self-guided tours permitted.
- Ms. Ebbert will create a tour schedule / list for upcoming SOTPWG events.
- After discussion about House docent-led and self-guided tours, it was agreed that the promotional flyer will announce the availability of self-guided tours and the acceptance of donations.
- Ms. Kutrell volunteered to create a Merrick House coloring book, and suggested a flyer for children that include an exploration "puzzle" for them to search for and mark various features of the House.

Ms. Baez arrived at 9:20 a.m.

Annual Holiday Open House: Ms. Yusko, Chair

Group discussion about December 14th event:

- Details were discussed, and agreement was reached about vendors, event schedule, event flyer and other promotional efforts, gifts for children, face painting, tour ticketing; water bottle sales and the need for high school student volunteers to help with setting up and removing chairs.

HOUSE REPORT: November 2014

- Total visitors in November: 19 Adults; 23 Seniors; 4 Students; 0 Youth; 0 Children; plus walkthrough tours given during Althea's Garden Party.
- Trust Fund Balance: \$20,663 (expenditure account); \$3,472 (revenue account).
- Roxy O'Neal Bolton Fund: \$4,939 (unchanged).
- Regarding the proposed headboard donation offered by Whitney Huttig, staff reported that the owner decided instead to give the headboard to a family member.
- Rental requests:
 - 1) South Miami Garden Club: Staff will respond to the rental request submitted by Suzanne Brawner on behalf of the South Miami Garden Club for a February 3, 2015 meetings. Approximately 35 chairs will be needed inside the living room area.

Ms. Rodriguez made a motion to approve the South Miami Garden Club House rental on Tuesday, February 3, 2015. Ms. Lam seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

2) The Villagers requested use of the House porch for a lemonade and cookies gathering on January 24, 2015, and for consideration of a fee waiver.

Ms. Lam made a motion to waive the fee for the Villagers for the Saturday, January 24th event. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baez and unanimously approved.

3) Two requests were received from Docent Juan Riera for Dade Heritage Days House tours, both scheduled for Saturday, March 14th: 1) 9:15 to 11:30 a.m. gathering of the Miami Memorabilia Cub (12 to 18 people);

4) 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. gathering of the Cuban Philatelic Society of America (approximately 15 people).

Ms. Ebbert made a motion to waive fees for both tours given by Mr. Riera. Ms. Lam seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

- University of Miami November 14, 2014 Event: Ms. Kautz reported that the event was excellent, as were the caterers. Lighting for the front porch was created by a lighting designer, using LED lights for minimal electrical impact; a security guard was on duty throughout the night; Arva Parks' presentation was well received; attendance reached approximately 100; a full day's rental fee was paid.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Financial Aspects of SOTPWG Events:

Ms. Kautz distributed and reviewed a summary of SOTPWG event income and expenses thus far: Historical Resources Department (HRD) annual budget (FY 2014/2015) for Merrick House SOTPWG events: \$4,000; expenditures to date for two events: \$3,226.82; remaining budget funds: \$773.18. Beyond the \$773.18 are sponsorships received and deposited to date: \$1,450. Funds collected through donations, the raffle, auction, food sales and vendor fees: \$3,252. Tour revenue (always dedicated to the House): \$217.

The concern of staff, Ms. Kautz said, is that it is perceived that event income, excluding sponsorships, is for the House. She pointed out that event promotional efforts state that event proceeds benefit the Merrick House restoration.

Ms. Spain added that all monies received are deposited in the House Trust Fund, but the portion that may be used to augment the Board's HRD budget for events and other Board expenses is sponsorship funding. She advised that donation jars displayed and promotional materials issued for SOTPWG events need clear communication that states that donations are for future House events. Ms. Ebbert volunteered to revise donation jar signage accordingly, and event promotional flyers and other public notices about events will not reference House restoration.

Ms. Rodriguez stated her understanding that the Board was permitted to borrow money from the House Trust Fund as long as the money was repaid, and said that additional expenses for events could be paid back to the Fund from money generated by the event.

Ms. Spain said the City Attorney advised that the Board could request event sponsorship funding. She will clarify the exact procedure required for donations and SOTPWG events with the financial auditor and City Attorney. In the meantime, she reminded the Board that \$773 remained for SOTPWG events in the HRD budget plus another \$1,450 in sponsorship funding. She suggested a more proactive Board effort to generate event sponsorships.

OLD BUSINESS:

Toy Drive – Fire Department: Board members will bring toys for the Fire Department toy drive on Sunday.

Richard Merrick Paintings: Ms. Spain reviewed Yvonne Ferrer's resume / website, explored information about restorations she has completed, and expressed concern about the level of Ms. Ferrer's credentials and experience versus the outstanding credentials and experience of Rusty Levinson. Ms. Spain will schedule a meeting with Ms. Ferrer.

State of Florida State Grant Application: Ms. Ahouse reported that the grant application will be ranked in December; however, grant approval won't be known until the Florida budget is approved in July 2015.

NEW BUSINESS:

Docent Application: Ms. Ebbert reported that a man named Brett Gillis mentioned to her during the Villagers tour that he had repeatedly applied to be a Merrick House docent. Ms. Kautz said Mr. Gillis offered to volunteer to

help with the archives as part of his research for a book he plans to write; however, he has not submitted an application to be a docent. Ms. Kautz said he was welcome to submit a docent application. She also said one docent application had been received and was pending.

Silent Auction Donor: Ms. Lam reported that the person who donated necklaces for one of the SOTPWG events indicated her willingness to continuously donate items for silent auctions.

Flower Pots Donated by Julie Petrella Arch: Ms. Rodriguez reported that two vintage flower pots were offered for donation to add to the House's garden area. She said the pots were currently outside on either side of the bench, to be viewed by the Board for potential acceptance during the January 2015 meeting.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: Monday, January 12, 2015, 2014, 8:30 a.m., Merrick House.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dona M. Spain", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dona M. Spain
Historic Preservation Officer